COMBAT SUPPORT AND COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT TRANSFORMATION

Sowing Seeds For The Objective Force

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Introduction

Objective Force operations will deviate dramatically from present-day operations. Support and sustainment operations must change dramatically to support the operational reach and increased tempo of maneuver forces that conduct decentralized operations throughout the extended battlespace. This effort requires that we break from business as usual and attack our deployment, support, and sustainment efforts in new and different ways. The success of the Objective Force depends on the seeds we sow today in the combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) transformation.

Not Business As Usual

CS/CSS transformation will dramatically change the way our Army is supported and sustained as part of a joint force. CS/CSS transformation must ensure that Army forces are capable of deploying rapidly to support current and future operational force deployment goals and can effectively support and sustain the full spectrum of synchronized joint Army operations. To achieve this, we must enhance strategic responsiveness and meet deployment timelines; reduce the CS and CSS footprint in combat zones; and finally, reduce the cost of generating and sustaining forces without reducing warfighting capability or readiness.

We know that some things will not change. As always, joint force commanders will get what they deserve—better support than their adversaries. Performance will still be judged based on the ability to provide the right stuff at the right time and place. We will continue to project forces to trouble spots around the world, and our national economic overmatch will fuel that effort; however, some things must change.

Our past systems were inefficient. Joint force commanders (JFCs) traded agility and freedom of maneuverability for their world-class support. Reliance on a large logistics footprint and the operational burden of its protection forced JFCs to temper their appetite in terms of distance, intensity, and operation duration. In addition, the size of the supporting and sustaining forces reduced force closure because of additional strategic lift requirements.

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Logistics Vision

The Army Chief of Staff's logistics vision states, "In terms of sustainability, the logistics footprint will be reduced. For this to occur, the numbers of vehicles deployed must be controlled, reach capabilities must be leveraged, weapons and equipment designed in a systems approach, and projection and sustainment processes revolutionized."

If the Army is to realize the full potential of this vision, it must address three factors. First, the Army must invest in equipment that is more reliable and consumes fewer resources. Second, the Army must replace its inventory-based sustainment culture with a distribution-based system that allows commanders to maneuver with only what they need for a particular mission, free of excess. Finally, sustainment forma-

tions will have to change to accommodate this new logistics system.

The Physical Change

The most challenging factor involves equipment. The Army must overcome the tyranny of physics. We must use science and technology and our associated acquisition process to procure more capable and less demanding equipment. In other words, no reduction in sustainment footprint will come without a reduced demand for supplies. To address this problem, the Army must change the criteria used to acquire new equipment. The costs associated with sustainment must be balanced with the costs of acquisition so that avoidable sustainment costs are averted during the procurement process rather than paid for, like a tax, by the operational force. For instance, we may pay more for a family of ultrareliable systems with common components and embedded diagnostics/prognostics, but this will avoid operating costs and reduce the footprint downstream. More important, the Army must explore and invest in more efficient technologies. Future systems must be smaller, lighter, more reliable, capable, and survivable.

A Paradigm Shift

The next factor that must be addressed is the cultural shift from an inventory to a distribution system. Timely, reliable information is the backbone of this system. As sustainment operations become more precise, our reliance on assured communications and powerful information systems becomes a prerequisite rather than a luxury. The need for total asset visibility is absolute because as safety stocks decline, correct information becomes a safety net. The distribution system must be linked to maneuvering-unit operations and provide logistical situational understanding, total asset visibility, actual and projected consumption rates, and positive control to end users from all sources.

Completing The Puzzle

Information alone, however, won't deliver the goods. An agile, efficient transportation system is also required. The operational force is designed to fight over greater distances. While this alone drives an increasingly vertical distribution system, the nonlinearity of the future fight accentuates this need. Reduced inventory requires an efficient distribution system that allows appropriate packaging at the national or intermediate staging base for delivery through the distribution system without repacking. This means that commonality must be designed into our transportation systems regardless of mode.

The final factor—organizational redesign—results from the success of the first two. Reducing demand and employment of a distribution-based system will enable the Army to field different, smaller, more-efficient sustainment formations that enable the combat force to accomplish missions without reducing JFC options. However, for this to become a reality, the Army must do the following:

- Develop a deployment infrastructure to meet stated deployment timelines—a brigade in 96 hours, a division in 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days—wherever Army forces are stationed;
- Develop improved strategic mobility platforms that allow combat formations to deploy from their CONUS or intermediate staging bases;
- Develop air-transportable platforms capable of rapid relocation by in-theater lift assets;
- Develop transportation systems that rapidly traverse the extended battlespace;
- Enhance installation capabilities to project and sustain forces using split-based operations;
- Develop unitized and modular forces that can deploy directly into operations with minimal or no reception, staging, onward movement, or integration;
- Develop alternative theater opening capabilities that enable and improve over-the-shore logistics as well as airfield development and enhancement;
- Reduce system weight and cube of systems while increasing survivability and improving deployability;
- Reduce power and energy requirements;
- Develop systems with real-time diagnostics and prognostics that support higher operational readiness of all systems;
- Develop ultrareliable and fail-safe designs that reduce unanticipated equipment failure; and
- Develop systems that are interoperable with other Army, joint, and multinational systems.

Conclusion

The Objective Force requires a change in how the Army fights on future battlefields. To achieve this, the Army must change how it conducts business today. The CS/CSS transformation enables it to do just that.

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